

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 540

By Butt

A RESOLUTION relative to the United States Pledge of Allegiance.

WHEREAS, on February 10, 1954, Senator Homer Ferguson of Michigan introduced a bill in the United States Congress to amend the Pledge of Allegiance by adding the words, “under God,” to the text of the pledge; and

WHEREAS, Senator Ferguson chose February 10, 1954, as the date to introduce the bill, because it marked the five-year anniversary of the imprisonment of Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty of Hungary, who was imprisoned and tortured by Communists for his sermons exposing the goal of Communism to eradicate all religion; and

WHEREAS, speeches were delivered in Congress by members of both political parties, honoring Cardinal Mindszenty and emphasizing the threat posed to America by Communism; and

WHEREAS, upon introduction of the bill, Senator Ferguson commented, “I believe this modification of the pledge is important because it highlights one of the real fundamental differences between the free world and the Communist world, namely, belief in God,” furthering that with, “Our nation is founded on a fundamental belief in God, and the first and most important reason for the existence of our Government is to protect the God-given rights of our citizens. Spiritual values are every bit as important to the defense and safety of our nation as are military and economic values.”; and

WHEREAS, the vote to add “under God” to the United States Pledge of Allegiance was a unanimous vote in the affirmative; and

WHEREAS, on February 7, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower became convinced that adding the words, "under God," to the United States Pledge of Allegiance would be the right thing to do after hearing Reverend George Docherty preach that the phrase, "nation under God," which was first used in the Gettysburg Address, was appropriate to be added to the United States Pledge of Allegiance, because freedom "is defined by a fundamental belief in God"; and

WHEREAS, the first time the revised United States Pledge of Allegiance was recited was on Flag Day, June 14, 1954; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this General Assembly to recognize and honor such an important date which strengthens the ties of history that bind us to our Christian heritage; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that this General Assembly hereby recognizes February 10, 1954, as the anniversary of the addition of the words, "under God," to the United States Pledge of Allegiance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Clerk of the Senate is directed to cause the text of this resolution to be transcribed into the Senate Journal.